

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-09

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FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2176

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 11426

NOFORN

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: PINT, CH

SUBJECT: FEI I-MIN COMMENTS ON CHINA AFTER MAO

1. DURING A SEPTEMBER 30 CALL ON TA KUNG PAO PUBLISHER FEI I-MIN BY DPO AND CHIEF OF CRS, FEI COMMENTED, BUT JUST BARELY, ON SHORT-TERM PROSPECTS FOR POST-MAO CHINA. AFTER AN UNUSUALLY LONG MONOLOGUE ON CHINA'S MANY TRIBULATIONS DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, FEI RESPONDED TO A DIRECT QUESTION ON CHINA'S FUTURE BY SAYING THAT THE PRC NOW NEEDED A PERIOD TO "COOL DOWN" AFTER THE LOSS OF THREE TOP LEADERS, EARTHQUAKES AND OTHER TROUBLES. HE CHARACTERIZED THE PRESENT AS A PERIOD OF "TRANSITION". EMPHASIZING THAT THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF A REAL SUCCESSOR TO MAO OR CHOU EN-LAI -- THEY WERE IRREPLACEABLE -- FEI SAID CHINA NOW REQUIRES A GROUP OF PATRIOTIC LEADERS WHO AT LEAST WILL FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF MAO AND CHOU IN THEIR PRACTICE OF ABNEGATION.

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2. FEI DISMISSED SPECULATION THAT A CENTRAL COMMITTEE

MEETING WAS HELD WHEN THE LEADERSHIP WAS GATHERED IN PEKING FOR MAO'S FUNERAL. A TIME OF SUCH GRIEF, HE SAID, WAS NOT THE OCCASION TO ATTEMPT TO CHOOSE NEW VICE CHAIRMEN OF THE PARTY. FEI NOTED THAT, IN ADDITION TO PROBLEMS AT THE CENTER, THERE WERE MANY PROVINCIAL MATTERS WHICH DEMANDED THE ATTENTION OF THE PRC LEADERS. AS AN EXAMPLE, HE SAID THAT CANTON MR POLITICAL COMMISSAR WEI KUO-CHING HAD TO BE IN PEKING FOR THE FUNERAL SINCE HE WAS A POLITBURO MEMBER, BUT DURING THE COURSE OF THEOFFICIAL MOURNING PERIOD HE HAD TO MAKE SEVERAL TRIPS TO CANTON TO ATTEND TO LOCAL MATTERS. FEI CONCLUDED THAT AS SOON AS THE POLITBURO COULD REACH A CONSENSUS ON THE MAJOR QUESTIONS FACING POST-MAO CHINA A PARTY PLENUM AND NATIONAL PEOPLE'S CONGRESS WOULD BE CALLED TO BE HELD CONSECUTIVELY.

CROSS

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